

## **Marketing Methods to Help Cure Low Car Counts**

### *How Tailored, Measurable Marketing Methods Can Make your Advertising Budget Work for You*

- Jay Siff

John Wanamaker, considered by many to be one of the fathers of modern advertising, once said: “half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is that I don’t know which half.” Well I hate to break it to you, Johnny, but things have gotten even worse.

We live in a world that is saturated by mass media coverage. Hundreds of channels offer us the widest selection of programming—and advertisements—ever available, and marketers pay well to compete for the attention of consumers. But do traditional advertising methods actually deliver a solid return on investment for small business owners? Not usually. Local auto repair shops are unlikely to see a significant increase in car counts as a result of a commercial or radio advertisement. Chances are that if you’re still spending advertising dollars on local television ads or radio commercials, you’re not wasting just half of your advertising budget; you’re wasting *most* of it.

So what is a business owner to do? Simple. Where Wanamaker had it wrong was that he believed advertising was some sort of ethereal concept incapable of being tracked, measured, and managed. In reality, your business’s marketing dollars are as easily tracked and measured as your inventory levels or profit margins. All you have to do in order to take your marketing activities to a higher level is implement marketing plans that have been designed to deliver results that can be measured in quantifiable terms.

For the past seven years I have worked with American Car Care Centers (ACCC) and its network of dealers to increase car counts and expand the customer base of ACCC’s business owners. The marketing methods that I advocate focus on 1. reaching out to receptive audiences through Moving Targets ([www.movingtargets.com](http://www.movingtargets.com)) initiatives in order to generate new business, and 2. encouraging previous customers to purchase services more often through Loyal Rewards ([www.loyalrewards.com](http://www.loyalrewards.com)) offers.

### **Moving Targets**

Moving Targets focuses on approaching new movers—individuals who have recently relocated to your town or city—and enticing them to visit your business with an attractive offer for free service. By welcoming a new mover to the neighborhood through an offer of free service, you are establishing your business as a friendly part of the customer’s new surroundings. People are creatures of routine, and if you can capture a new mover’s attention before your competitors do there is a greater likelihood that your business will become part of your new mover’s daily, weekly, or monthly routine.

But approaching your new mover with an attractive offer is only the first step in the Moving Targets equation. Once your new mover arrives to redeem your free service offer you must make sure to impress him with your business’s level of service. We’ve all heard

that “you only get one chance to make a first impression,” but nowhere is this idea more important than in the modern business world. Make a positive first impression and you could end up with a dedicated long-term customer.

## **Loyal Rewards**

But will positive experiences and world-class service always ensure that your customers will keep coming back? Unfortunately, no. But you can increase the chances of seeing greater levels of repeat business by instituting programs that encourage existing customers to visit you more frequently—programs I call Loyal Rewards. They work like this:

Every time a customer visits your business, ask for his email address. Use these addresses to create an electronic database of previous customers. Once you know who your customers are, all you have to do in order to draw them back to your business is give them a good reason to return. Next time your business is having a slow week, for example, you can send out a discount offer for a particular service (valid for that week only) to your previous customers. You’d be surprised to see how a simple service offer can drive repeat business directly to your front door.

The marketing strategies that I advocate with Moving Targets and Loyal Rewards campaigns are reliable, proven methods that deliver results and help businesses to track their marketing dollars. In addition, a number of companies, including American Car Care and Michelin, have long-standing business relationships with Moving Targets. In fact, ACCC dealers can now receive a 100% advertising co-op from Michelin for using the Moving Targets new resident program. Marketing doesn’t have to, and shouldn’t, be a crap shoot. Instituting tailored, measurable marketing campaigns can help make sure that both halves of your advertising budget work to your benefit.

*Jay Siff is the CEO and Founder of Moving Targets® and Loyal Rewards® and is a recognized expert on smart marketing strategies. Siff works closely with small business owners to help them attract new customers and build on existing customer relationships with targeted new mover marketing campaigns and customer loyalty initiatives. Additional information about Siff, Moving Targets, and Loyal Rewards can be found online at [www.movingtargets.com](http://www.movingtargets.com) and [www.loyalrewards.com](http://www.loyalrewards.com).*